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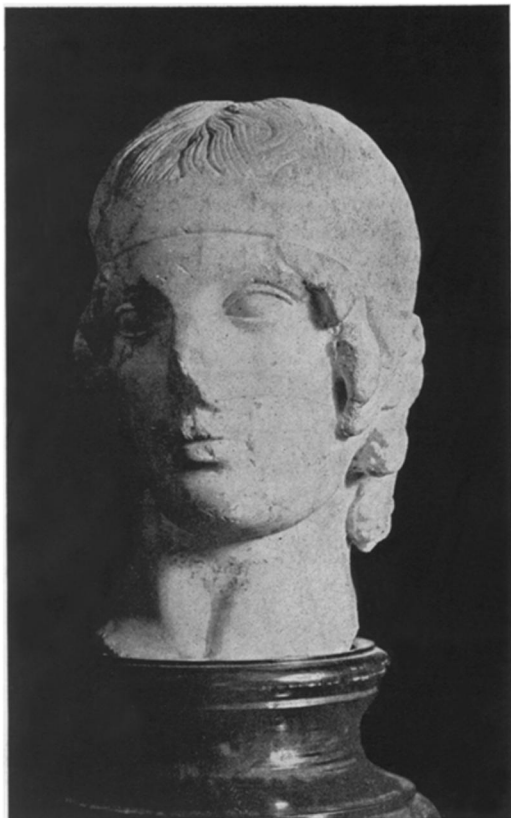


Fig. 1

Greek and Roman Marbles from the Brandegee Collection

THE four marble heads recently lent the Museum by Mrs. Brandegee are as good examples of four different epochs of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture as could be desired. Each of them has elements of beauty or of strength, and each illustrates clearly certain of the aims of the sculptors by whom, and the ideals of the people for whom, they were carved. Embracing as they do a period of some four hundred years, they serve as a scale by which to measure and estimate part of the mental change which took place in the classic world between the time of the rise of the Athenian power and that of the Roman Empire. At first sight they may seem to be alike in being busts,

but only the two male heads are, in the technical sense, busts, that is, heads carved free-standing and alone, with no body attached to them. The two female heads must be thought of as portions of complete statues. There is much technical and archaeological evidence of indubitable character which proves this. It is possible that the younger male head also is a copy of the head of some unknown statue, but there is no evidence to make this point certain.

The older of the two male heads is shown, by the method of finishing the block of marble below the neck, to have been made pure and simply as a bust, and belongs to a class of which there are many examples, though none of any finer quality than this one.

The most ancient of the four heads is the smaller female one (Fig. 1). It was found in the southern part of Italy and is of Greek workmanship. This is unquestionably proved by the physical characteristics of the face, by the arrangement of the hair, and by the technique. This being granted, there still remain various questions, such as the date when it was made, the school to which the sculptor belonged, what the statue to which the head belonged represented, and finally, whether this head and its now lost body were an original work or an old copy of a still older original. Answers of varying certainty can be given to these problems. The date is the first half of the fifth century B. C. This is shown by the full oval of the face below the eyes, by the large dome of the skull above the eyes, and by the eyes themselves. It was about 460 B. C. that it became common knowledge to all Greek sculptors that a more natural appearance would be given to the eyes if the fold of the upper lid at the outer corner was marked. Up to about the date mentioned this had not been done, but the upper and lower lid were represented as joining in a smooth angle, as in the example before us. The date suggested by this technical point is borne out by the dressing of the hair. This is parted in the middle and drawn in waving strands tight under the broad fillet which passes across the forehead above the ears to the back, where it is tied, thus leaving the ends of the locks free to fall in loose curls around the ears and over the nape of the neck. Seen from in front, this arrangement gives an extremely graceful outline, which is seen in a more fully developed form in the other female head and makes its most exquisite appearance in



Fig. 2

the so-called Athena Lemnia. Though the nose of the head has been broken and the lips battered, there is still evident a noticeable tenderness of expression which is enhanced by the slight bending of the head to one side, a movement which dispels the otherwise slight archaic stiffness. A pose such as this, which gives a feeling of very real sentiment, is constantly seen in works of the early fifth century. The other questions raised by this head are not so easy to answer. The one whether the work is the head of the original statue or is an ancient copy is perhaps incapable at present of definite solution, but certain details in the working (as of the ears) tend to make me believe that this is a very early copy of a lost original. Whether the original was made in southern Italy, where this head was found, or in Greece, cannot be told until further discoveries shall have made clear the exact differences between the work of Greece proper and that of Magna Græcia. Judging by our present knowledge, the head might well come from the former land.

The larger female head (Fig. 2) was found in central Italy and is one of the best of many copies that exist of this head.* It is usually called "Sappho," but there is absolutely no reason to believe that the great poetess of the seventh century B. C. is represented in this magnificent type of the latter half of the fifth century. It is more probably the head of a goddess, perhaps of Aphrodite. Though we may be in doubt as to whom the head represents, it is universally accepted that the original was an Attic work of the school of Phidias. Furthermore, it shows the full splendor of the Periclean age. There is no longer any trace of archaic stiffness such as is visible in the smaller and earlier head. The naturalism of the thick curling hair held by the double bands above the brow and the full but simple modelling of the face betray the hand of a master, even though we see them but through the veil of the copyist's rendering. The physical beauty, the wide-set, quiet eyes, the sensitive, half-opened lips, the grand columnar neck show us Athens at her best.

The two male busts are not so attractive as are the two female heads, but they are no less fine in

* There is another fine copy in the possession of Mrs. Brandege.

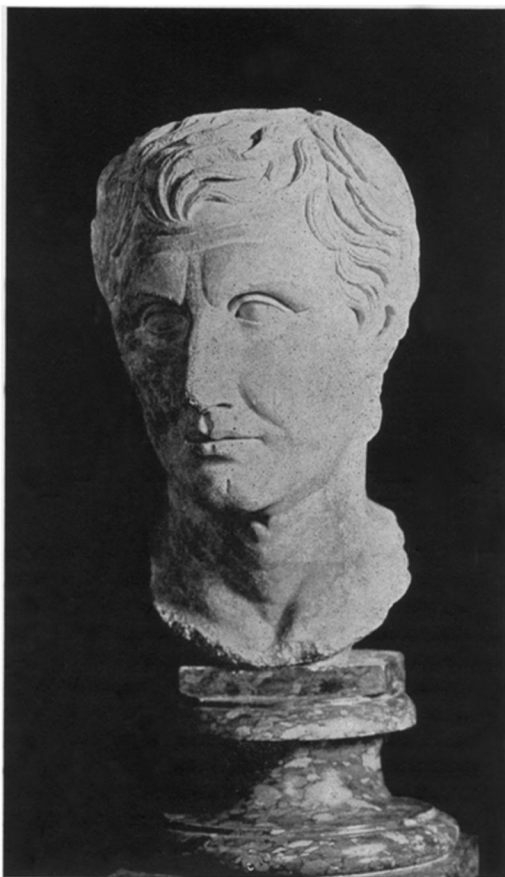


Fig. 3

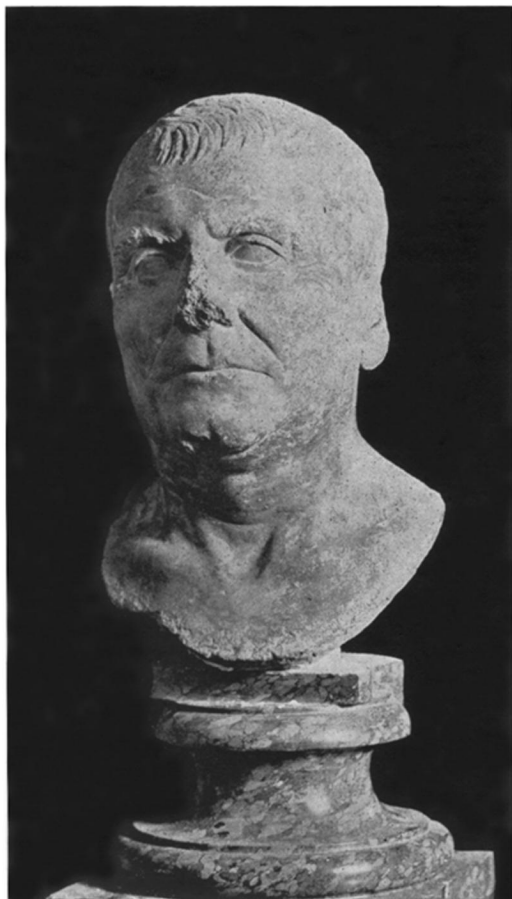


Fig. 4

their own individual ways and are equally characteristic of their different epochs and schools. The younger of the two (which was found in central Italy) is a replica of a well-known Greek portrait commonly called "Menander" (Fig. 3). The evidence for the justification of this name is, however, so indecisive that the head may be studied merely as a work of art. The emphasis with which the sculptor has shown the individual characteristics of the head (such as the nose, mouth, and shape of skull) make it plain that it is a portrait; the method of representing the hair in long, disordered strands points to a time not earlier than the middle of the fourth century B. C. The slightly troubled expression of the face, the sadness of the eyes and mouth — a sadness as of one to whom the vanity of life was very present — is such as was common in the Greek world from the fourth century onwards. It was, perhaps, not so much sadness and worry as an abiding gravity which gave way to no useless repining, but, as can be seen in the vigorous pose of this head, could maintain itself with strength and dignity. Though we cannot tell who the portrait represents, and while the original might have been made later than the fourth century

B. C., it is safe to regard this head as a fine example of the art of portraiture of that epoch. The Museum possesses another replica of this same portrait, which lacks the freshness and naturalness of the one belonging to Mrs. Brandegee. The modelling is both less true and less subtle. It has the clumsiness which a trained eye recognizes at once even without the aid of comparison.*

The last of the four heads, that of the old man (Fig. 4), is a superb example of Roman portraiture of the time of the Republic. It cannot lay claim to any beauty of form or feature; it is uncompromisingly homely. Nevertheless it will possibly interest the casual visitor more than the other heads because of its undoubted likeness to many of our own Yankee forbears. The sculptor was a great master. The way in which he has rendered the signs of old age in the withered neck, the irregular wrinkles of the brow, and the uneven mouth is magnificent. It is realism of a perfect kind, for the evidence of the wear and tear of life is subdued by and made minor to the splendid and enduring vigor of the mind and character behind the cheerful old face. What an old age! The sap may be running slow, the body may show the blows dealt by life, but the stiff, short hair is still thick, the head is still held upright and forward. It is the face of a clean living, plain thinking man, one who had "held both hands before the fires of life," and seems to scarcely suppress a smile at the thought that any one should want the portrait of his old face.

RICHARD NORTON.

William Pitt Preble Longfellow

WILLIAM Pitt Preble Longfellow, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Museum from 1883 until his resignation in 1910, died August 3 last. Upon his election to the Board Mr. Longfellow was appointed a member of the committee which, under the By-Laws then in force, administered the artistic interests of the Museum, and continued a member for twenty-three years, until, in 1906, he asked to be relieved from the duty. In 1888 Mr. Longfellow was added to a committee appointed the previous year to carry out the final enlargement of the first Museum building on Copley Square. In 1899 he was made a member of the committee on the Library of the Museum, serving until, in 1906, the committee was discontinued in accordance with its own request. During eight years, from 1882 to 1890, Mr. Longfellow gave instruction in perspective at the School of Drawing and Painting, now the School of the Museum.

In accepting Mr. Longfellow's resignation at the annual meeting of 1910, the Trustees voted that the following minute expressing their appreciation

*A similar case can be seen in two heads of Augustus now in the Museum. One of them is from Sardinia; the other, belonging to the Fogg Museum, is from Italy. Though the former is the more complete of the two, it is greatly inferior to the less perfect one. It is dull and lifeless like a tracing, while the other is vivid and natural.